

To be used with the March 27, 2017, issue

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Finding Fake News

After you've read this week's cover story, your teacher will assign you a news article to evaluate. Follow the steps below to determine if the news article is credible.

1. What is the headline of the article? \_\_\_\_\_

a. Does it have excessive punctuation (!!) or ALL CAPS for emphasis?  Yes  No

b. How does the headline make you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Summarize the main topic of the article. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the news source? \_\_\_\_\_

a. Conduct a brief online search. Is the source reputable?  Yes  No

b. How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there a byline (writer's name) attached to the article?  Yes  No

a. Conduct a brief search on the writer. Has he or she published any other articles?  Yes  No

5. Does the article have a recent date on it?  Yes  No

6. Have other news organizations covered this topic?  Yes  No

If so, can you list at least three reputable sources that reported the story?

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

7. Search online for the names of experts and organizations mentioned in the article. Are they credible?

Yes  No

a. How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Based on your research, do you believe this news article is credible? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Twenty-two babies hatched from eggs laid by this mother "dragon."



September 22, 2016

# Monster Alert!

Baby "dragons" were born this summer in a cave in Europe.

By Jennifer Marino Walters

**T**his summer, a cave in Central Europe got a lot of attention when it became home to more than two dozen baby dragons. These amphibians (animals that begin life in the water and move onto land as adults) are actually called olms. An olm is a type of salamander that looks like a dragon, which is how it got its nickname. The birth of these creatures is an extremely rare event.

A female olm might lay eggs just once every six years. Excitement over the possibility of new babies started in January, when the first egg was spotted deep within the Postojna (post-oy-nah) Cave in Slovenia. In the end, with the help of scientists, 22 olms were born between May 30 and July 14. They are now growing into healthy teenage dragons.

Olms live in underwater limestone caves in Central Europe. These caves are difficult to reach, so scientists don't often get to observe olms in their natural habitat (place where a type of animal usually lives).

"The fact that they are so mysterious makes them even more intriguing," says Sabina Paternost, a spokesperson for the researchers at Postojna Cave.

Olms, which can grow to be up to 16 inches long, are one of the world's largest cave animals. No natural light reaches these deep caves, so many animals that live there can't see. But olms have other special skills that help them survive. They use their incredible senses of smell and hearing to hunt worms, crabs, and snails. Olms can also survive without food for as long as 10 years.

When a female olm laid 64 eggs in the Postojna Cave last winter, scientists thought that only two or three of them would hatch. The last time an olm laid eggs at Postojna Cave, none of the eggs hatched. So this time, scientists worked very hard to care for the olm eggs. About one-third of the baby olms survived, and they appear to be doing well.



An olm egg hatches in the Postojna Cave.



This spider was recently discovered in the Amazon rainforest.



Dozens of giant baby spiders hatched from these eggs.

# Monster Babies!

Scientists discover a 12-inch-long spider and dozens of its giant eggs.

By Michelle Cullen Digrancesco

Imagine a spider that can grow to be a foot long, has razor-sharp fangs, and lays dozens of eggs the size of gum balls. It sounds like something out of a science fiction novel. But this spider actually exists. Scientists recently discovered it in the Amazon rainforest. Located in South America, the Amazon is the largest rainforest in the world.

The new species is called the kileto spider. Scientists from the Exotic Species Institute of Biodiverse Sciences, in Brazil, spotted it in 2015 using hidden cameras. The spider had burrowed under leaves at the base of a tree and was guarding dozens of large eggs. The scientists observed the spider on camera for about two weeks. During that time, the eggs hatched, and dozens of 6-inch-long baby spiders came crawling out!

“I couldn’t believe my eyes,” says Olivia Ruagliarella, one of the scientists who studied the new spider. “The babies are so much bigger than most adult spiders.”

The new species is a type of huntsman spider. These spiders are known for having extremely long legs. But scientists had never seen a huntsman spider with legs as long as this one. The new species also lays eggs that are much bigger than those of other huntsman spiders.

To find out if the spider was really a new species, the scientists couldn’t just rely on the video footage. They had to collect specimens, or samples, to bring back to their lab. But that was no easy task. The spider has a venomous bite that can paralyze large prey—including everything from birds to wild hogs. The scientists wore protective masks, gloves, and suits, and lured the spiders into a cage.

After two years of comparing the spiders with other huntsman spiders, the scientists finally announced that they had found a new species.

“It was thrilling to be that close to a new species,” says Ruagliarella. “The fact that they are so dangerous makes it even more exciting.”